

What is claimed is:

1. A cutting chain comprising a plurality of cutter links with a strap link joining adjacent cutter links forming an endless chain, wherein at least one cutter link comprises:
 - a pair of side plates;
 - a support member bridging the side plates, the support member having an arcuate support surface;
 - at least one cutting member attached onto the arcuate support surface of the support member; and
 - a drag plate attached to the support member.
2. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the side plates are substantially parallel to each other.
3. The cutting chain of claim 1 comprising a plurality of cutting members, each cutting member having a bottom end and being supported by the support surface such that the bottom end of the cutting member is positioned orthogonally relative to a plane tangent to the support surface.
4. The cutting chain of claim 3 wherein each cutting member comprises a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is uncanted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.
5. The cutting chain of claim 3 wherein each cutting member comprises a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is canted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.
6. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the drag plate comprises: an arcuate portion; and a pair of side portions extending downwardly from the arcuate portion, with each side portion being attached to a corresponding side plate.

7. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the drag plate is attached orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.

8. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the drag plate is attached non-orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.

9. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the drag plate is characterized by a concave excavating surface.

10. The cutting chain of claim 1 wherein the support member is characterized by an interior passage that extends substantially parallel to the direction of travel of the cutting chain.

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11. A cutter link for a cutting chain comprising:
a pair of side plates;
an arcuate support member bridging the side plates;
at least one cutting member attached onto the support member; and
a drag plate attached to the support member.

12. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the cutter link further comprises a riser member interposed between the side plates and the support member.

13. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the side plates are substantially parallel to each other.

14. The cutter link of claim 11 comprising a plurality of cutting members, each cutting member having a bottom end and being supported by the support surface such that the bottom end of the cutting member is positioned orthogonally relative to a plane tangent to the support surface.

15. The cutter link of claim 14 wherein each of the plurality of cutting members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is uncanted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

16. The cutter link of claim 14 wherein each of the plurality of cutting members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is canted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

17. The cutter link of claim 15 wherein the drag plate further comprises: an arcuate portion; and a pair of side portions extending downwardly from the arcuate portion, with each side portion being attached to a corresponding side plate.

18. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the drag plate is attached orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.

19. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the drag plate is attached non-orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.

20. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the drag plate is characterized by a concave excavating surface.

21. The cutter link of claim 11 wherein the support member is characterized by an interior passage that extends substantially parallel to the direction of travel of the cutting chain.

22. A cutting chain comprising a plurality of cutter links forming an endless chain, wherein at least one cutter link comprises:

a support member comprising:

a pair of spaced planar side sections;

5 a bridge section interposed between the side sections, the bridge section comprising an arcuate support surface formed in a medial portion thereof; and

a plurality of cutting members supported by the support surface.

23. The cutting chain of claim 22 wherein the support member of the cutter link is characterized by an arcuate interior passage that extends substantially parallel to the direction of travel of the cutting chain.

24. The cutting chain of claim 23 wherein the at least one cutter link further comprises a drag plate attached to the support member.

25. The cutting chain of claim 24 wherein the drag plate comprises an upper portion having an arcuate upper edge and downwardly extending side portions, each side portion being attached to a corresponding lower portion of each side plate.

26. The cutting chain of claim 22 wherein the plurality of cutting members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is uncanted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

5 27. The cutting chain of claim 22 wherein the plurality of cutting members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is canted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

28. A cutter link for a cutting chain comprising:

a support member having an arcuate support surface; and

a plurality of cutting members disposed in laterally offset relationship at substantially the same longitudinal position on the arcuate support surface;

wherein the support member and the cutting members are adapted to permit substantially unrestricted selection of the lateral position of each cutting member on the arcuate support surface of the support member.

29. The cutter link of claim 28 wherein the at least one cutter link further comprises a drag plate attached to the support member.

30. The cutter link of claim 29 wherein the drag plate comprises an upper portion having an arcuate upper edge and downwardly extending side portions, each side portion being attached to a corresponding lower portion of each side plate.

31. The cutter link of claim 28 wherein each of the plurality of cutting members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is uncanted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

32. The cutter link of claim 28 wherein each of the plurality of cutting
5 members comprise a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane
that is canted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

33. The cutter link of claim 28 wherein the support member of the cutter link is characterized by an arcuate interior passage that extends substantially parallel to the direction of travel of the cutting chain.

34. A cutting chain comprising a plurality of cutter links with a strap link joining adjacent cutter links forming an endless chain, wherein at least one cutter link comprises:
a pair of side plates;
a support member bridging the side plates, the support member having an arcuate support surface; and
wherein the support member is characterized by an unobstructed arcuate interior passage that extends substantially parallel to the direction of travel of the cutting chain; and
a drag plate attached to the support member.
35. The cutting chain of claim 34 wherein the side plates are substantially parallel to each other.
36. The cutting chain of claim 34 wherein the drag plate comprises an arcuate portion.
37. The cutting chain of claim 36 wherein the drag plate further comprises a pair of side portions extending downwardly from the arcuate portion, with each side portion being attached to a corresponding side plate.
38. The cutting chain of claim 34 wherein the drag plate is attached orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.
39. The cutting chain of claim 34 wherein the drag plate is attached non-orthogonally relative to the longitudinal axis of the support member.
40. The cutting chain of claim 34 wherein the drag plate is characterized by a concave excavating surface.

41. A cutting chain comprising a plurality of cutter links interconnected by strap links to form an endless chain, wherein at least one cutter link comprises:

- a pair of side plates;
- a support member bridging the side plates;
- a drag plate supported by the support member; and
- a pair of fastening members disposed adjacent the drag plate and adapted to connect each side plate to a strap link wherein the drag plate is characterized having depending side portions which shield the fastening members.

42. The cutting chain of claim 41 wherein the support member comprises an arcuate support surface.

43. The cutting chain of claim 42 further comprising at least one cutting member attached onto the arcuate support surface of the support member.

44. The cutting chain of claim 43 wherein the cutting member comprises a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is canted relative to a direction of travel by the cutting chain.

45. The cutting chain of claim 43 wherein the cutting member comprises a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is uncanted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.

46. The cutting chain of claim 43 wherein the cutting member comprises a body having a cutting edge, the body and the cutting edge defining a plane that is canted relative to a direction of travel of the cutting chain.